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Children's Plays

JOE

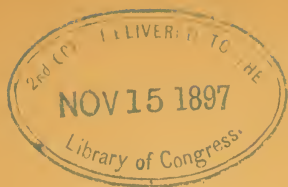
A COMEDY OF CHILD LIFE

BY

CHARLES BARNARD



CHICAGO
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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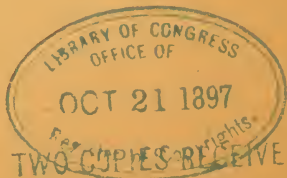
A Comedy of Child Life in Two Acts

BY

CHARLES BARNARD

AUTHOR OF "THE COUNTY FAIR," "PSYCHE, M. D.," ETC.

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CHARACTERS.

JOSEPHINE, *sometimes called "Joe,"* aged 10.
MARJORIE, *her sister,* aged 12.
KITTY BLANCHARD, *Joe's cousin,* aged 7.
DOLLY BLANCHARD, *Kitty's sister,* aged 9.
MASTER JACK, *Joe's brother,* aged 14.
MASTER SAM, *Kitty's brother,* aged 9.
KATY, aged 13.
PUSSIE, aged 6.
MICKY FLYNN, *a bad boy,* aged 12.
MRS. MORTON, *Joe's mother.*
MRS. NEAL, *Katy's mother.*

Plays forty-five minutes.

ACT I. A PARLOR IN MRS. MORTON'S HOUSE.
ACT II. A PATH IN THE WOODS.

Costumes of to-day.

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NOTE BY PUBLISHER.—Lightning may be produced by blowing finely powdered resin through a tin tube over a candle flame. Thunder is best imitated by shaking a piece of sheet-iron.

The sound of rain is made by a "rain box," which is prepared as follows: Take an ordinary cheese box, and around the inner rim fasten a number of slats about six inches apart, and extending from top to bottom of the box. The box must have an axle so that it will revolve like a wheel. Put a quart of dried peas in the box and suspend it between two supports outside the first entrance. When the box is revolved the rattling of the peas will make a good imitation of a rainstorm.

JOE.

ACT I.

[SCENE.—*A parlor or sitting-room in a country house, with entrances at right and left and, if convenient, a French window at back with view of garden or lawn. Simple furniture. At right, near front, a doll's wash-tub standing on a chair. Sundry pieces of doll's clothing drying on the backs of chairs, etc. At centre, a table with books, etc., and a box of caramels. Beside table, a rocking-chair. In front of table, a doll's bed made up. At left, in front, a doll's kitchen with utensils, etc.*

TIME.—*Morning in summer.*

Curtain discovers Joe washing a doll's garment in the tub; Kitty mixing flour and salt in some of the utensils, and Marjorie sitting on the floor, dressing a doll, by the little bed, and Dolly seated in the rocking-chair rocking a large rag doll to sleep. All work for a moment in silence.]

Dolly. [*Holding up doll.*] Tusan wants a dum-drop.

Marjorie. Oh! Your Susan is always wanting candy, and she can't eat a thing since her mouth was repaired.

Dolly. [*Looking at the doll.*] Tusan is 'speptic and I have to eat all her candy for her. Where are the dum-drops?

Marjorie. The gum-drops are all gone, Dolly, but you can have one of my caramels in that box. [*Dolly stands up, lays doll on table, face downward, and takes a caramel from table, and then slowly eats it.*]

Dolly. Fank you.

Joe. [*Holding up starched garment.*] I do believe I've starched Mandy's things too much. They will scratch her poor arms first time she puts them on. [*Puts garment in tub of water.*] I'll put this frock to soak. [*Washes the garment, vigorously splashing the water about.*]

Kitty. I'm afraid I've put too much salt in Stella's cake, and she'll be so thirsty there'll be no comfort living with her. [*Putting in more flour.*] It needs more flour.

Marjorie. Oh, your Stella has a china head. She won't mind a little salt. [*Here Joe, in washing, upsets the tub on the floor with a splash.*]

Joe. There! The tub just upset itself.

Marjorie. Oh, Josephine! What a mess you have made! What will mother say? Here it is your birthday and you're worse than ever! It does seem as if you never had any training.

Joe. [*Mops up the water with a clean handkerchief.*] Everything is perfectly depravitated. Wash-tub just upset itself. I declare it's no use trying to be good when things act so. I guess the minister's text was meant for me: "Chain up a child and away she will go." [*Here Kitty, in mixing the flour, gets it all on her dress.*]

Kitty. Oh! For gracious! Everything goes wrong just when you're trying to be 'ticular.

Marjorie. Why, Kitty Blanchard! Do look at your dress! What will mother say?

Dolly. Here's auntie coming now. [*Kitty and Joe hastily pick up their things.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Morton at right. Pauses in surprise at door.*]

Mrs. Morton. Oh, Josephine! Into trouble again! How did it happen?

Joe. Wash-tub just upset itself.

Mrs. Morton. And what are you doing with your handkerchief?

Joe. [*Looks at it.*] Oh, I forgot! I had to mop up the water with something.

Mrs. Morton. [*Crossing to centre.*] The very first present you received on your birthday—and now look at it!

Joe. [*Wringing it out.*] I don't know what's the matter with me. I started out this morning with a lot of new revolutions, but my fingers get bothered and everything goes wrong. I guess I'm a mistake—somehow.

Marjorie. You're half boy, Joe—that's what's the matter.

Joe. I wish I was all boy. Boys are something like.

Mrs. Morton. [*Taking Dolly up in her lap and sitting in rocking-chair; to Kitty.*] Oh, Kitty! Are you into mischief too? Do look at your dress. You look like Little Butterpat.

Dolly. Who was Butterpat?

Mrs. Morton. Oh, she was a girl I used to know.

Kitty. Tell us about her. What'd she do with the butter?

Mrs. Morton. It's an old story now.

Dolly. Oh, Goody! Aunty's going to tell us a story. [*To Mrs. Morton.*] Is it a really truly story?

Mrs. Morton. Yes, it's a true story. When I was about Joe's age we lived near the school-house where the post-office now stands, and I had a girl friend who lived next door. We were always together till one dreadful day her mother sent her to the store to buy some butter.

Joe. [*Standing by Mrs. Morton's chair.*] Why didn't her brother go for it?

Mrs. Morton. She had no brothers. [*Marjorie and Kitty stand on other side.*]

Joe. She never had any good times, then.

Mrs. Morton. Oh, yes, we did—real good times. Well, as I was saying, she was sent to get the butter, and when she came home she carried the butter on her arm and it stained her dress, and when I saw her I called her Little Butterpat.

Kitty. That wasn't her real name?

Mrs. Morton. Oh, no! Her name was Mary Samson. She was a sensitive little thing, and when I said she was Little Butterpat she went home, and that afternoon I heard her crying in the next yard. I wanted to go and tell her I didn't mean it, and that she wasn't Butterpat at all, but mother wouldn't let me go.

Marjorie. Why not? Wasn't she a good girl?

Mrs. Morton. Yes, she was a sweet little thing.

Joe. Could she row a boat, or skate, or ride a wheel.

Mrs. Morton. No. Girls didn't do such things in those days.

Joe. Then they didn't have any fun.

Mrs. Morton. Oh, yes; we had plenty of good times. Besides, she was learning to make lace, for her folks were not very well off. Well, as I was saying, something dreadful happened that very day. Poor Mary's father died very suddenly, and though I saw her twice all dressed in black, I never spoke to her again.

Dolly. Was she as good as you are?

Mrs. Morton. Oh, far better than I, for I never had a chance to tell her it was all in fun and that I didn't mean to hurt her feelings by calling her Butterpat.

Joe. Don't you think you could find her? Perhaps she has boys of her own, and I'd like to have 'em come to my party.

Mrs. Morton. I don't know where she is, dear. She went

away and I never saw her again. [*Puts Dolly down and rises.*] Now, Dolly, I must go to the kitchen and see about lunch. You and Kitty must stay to lunch with Marjorie and Joe and help them get ready for the party. There are nuts to crack and flowers to be cut in the garden.

Dolly. S'all you have strawberries for lunch?

Mrs. Morton. Yes, dear, strawberries and cream and round cakes.

Dolly. Den I fink I'll stay with you.

Mrs. Morton. So you shall, dear. [*To Joe.*] Josephine, you must clear away all these things before Norah comes to sweep the room. Remember the good resolutions you made this morning.

Joe. Somehow the revolutions didn't go all over me. My hands and feet got left out.

Mrs. Morton. [*Moves left; to Marjorie.*] Marjorie, if the little girl comes for the lace, come up to my room and get the work I have for her.

Marjorie. I don't know her. What's her name?

Mrs. Morton. [*At door left.*] It's Neal, I think. She's just moved into the village and I have not seen her yet, but I'm told she can mend lace nicely. Don't forget, Marjorie. [*Ex. left.*]

Marjorie. [*Picks up doll and sits in rocker.*] No, I'll not forget. [*To others.*] It's time the children had their nap. I must put Amanda Jane to bed.

Dolly. Where is Tusan? I must rock her.

Joe. [*Gives Dolly the doll from the table.*] Seems to me, Dolly, Susan has grown dreadful thin lately.

Dolly. [*Taking the doll.*] Ess. She got tored and the stuffing runs out. [*To Marjorie.*] Take me up. [*Marjorie takes Dolly in her lap and rocks the chair. If desired, Marjorie may recite the following in measured cadence while rocking the chair.*]

Marjorie. Sleep, dolly, sleep.
Faithful watches mother keeps
While her dolly sweetly sleeps.
Sleep, dolly, sleep.
Sleep and dream in mother's arm,
She will keep thee safe from harm,
Till she shall her dolly wake
And [*Bus.*] a dozen kisses take.

[*Joe and Kitty clear away the things and put them at back or carry them out at right, and then return.*]

[Enter Sam dressed in a gentleman's long coat and wearing a silk hat and wearing glasses and carrying a cane, right.]

Sam. [At door.] Hello !

Kitty. [With a laugh.] Oh, for gracious ! Who's that ?
[Others all laugh.]

Joe. Oh ! It's the Judge, dressed up in father's things.

Sam. [Comes down very gravely.] Anybody sick here ?
I'm the doctor.

Dolly. Ess ; I'm dreffle sick. I need a dum-drop.

Sam. [To Dolly.] Put out your tongue. [Dolly puts out tongue.] Oh, you've got the jumps real bad. You must take a medative.

Dolly. Is it nice to take ?

Sam. Oh, first-rate. You put the blue paper in one tumbler and the white paper in another, and then you drink 'em, and it tickles your nose.

Marjorie. [Seriously.] Oh, doctor ! I'm so glad you have come. Amanda Jane hasn't closed her eyes for two nights, and I'm much concerned about her.

Sam. [Cocks up the glasses, looks wise, and takes doll's pulse.] Her pulse is powerful. She's got the plumbago.

Kitty. [Showing her doll.] Dear doctor, do look at Stella ; she's quite speechless, and has no appetite.

Sam. [To Kitty.] One patient at a time, if you please. I might get the dog-noses all mixed up. [To Marjorie.] Put the child's feet in mustard and water, and bathe her head in chopped ice.

Joe. [To Marjorie.] I never would do it in the world, Marjorie. The paint will all come off.

Marjorie. Oh, we'll play it's mustard and water ; Amanda Jane won't know the difference. She's very dull for a doll of her size.

[Enter Jack, with straw hat on, at left.]

Jack. Hallo, Sam ! What you playing ?

Joe. Come in, Jack. We're playing doctor. It's great fun.

Marjorie. [To Jack.] Poor dear Amanda Jane has the plumbago.

Dolly. [To Jack.] Ess. And I'se got the jumps.

Joe. [To Jack.] The Judge is the doctor and he's describing the most dreadful things for the dolls.

Jack. [Sits at right, pulls newspaper from pocket.] Ho ! I shouldn't think that would be very great fun. I'd much rather hunt bears and buffaloes.

Kitty. [*To Sam.*] Dear doctor, do look at Stella. I feel sure something dreadful has happened to her.

Sam. [*Crossing to left.*] What are her simpletons, marm?

Kitty. [*Marjorie and Dolly look on with interest.*] She's very restless at night and her appetite's poor.

Sam. [*Taking paper and pencil from pocket and scribbling on it.*] Take that to the apothecary man, marm—I guess he lives in the barn—and give her two drops in a gallon of water every four hours.

Kitty. [*Picking up doll.*] Thank you, doctor; I'll go at once before the poor child is any worse.

Dolly. I want to go, too.

Marjorie. [*Putting down Dolly, and rising, leaving doll on table.*] Let's all go. Amanda Jane needs a tonic.

Dolly. And I need a dum-drop. [*Kitty moves up to back entrance, followed by Marjorie and Dolly.*]

Joe. [*To Marjorie.*] Where are you going?

Marjorie. We are going out to the potecary man in the barn. Come on, Joe. [*Ex. Kitty, Marjorie, Dolly and Joe, at back.*]

Sam. Well, I never did see such folks. They aren't any kind of patients. They never said a word about fees.

Jack. [*Showing paper.*] Oh, Sam! Just hear this. Isn't it prime? [*Reads from paper.*] "And the following day the boy hunters rose early, and after a hearty breakfast of salmon and bear-steak they struck their tent and embarked in their frail canoe on the placid waters of the Great Snake River. Their first adventure was the meeting of an alligator; but one shot from their trusty rifles laid the monster low, and they cut off his head for a trophy. Just then the young heroes saw a fleet of canoes filled with Indians coming down the river, and they knew they would have another brush with their savage foes. 'Now,' said Captain Lightfoot, 'don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes——' To be continued in our next." That's always the way. Just as it's most interesting it gets continued in our next.

Sam. Ho! No fellow could do such things.

Jack. Yes they can, and I tell you what, Sam Blanchard, I've been a-thinking of this for some time, and I've a great mind to go hunting buffaloes myself. [*Looks at paper.*] These boys in the pictures are no bigger than I am, and they had splendid times, and saw Indians.

Sam. Saw real live Indians?

Jack. Of course. I guess we could go out West just as the

boy hunters did. They just walked out there ; and oh, I know ! there's an old gun in the garret that we might take.

Sam. I've got a bow and arrow and a sling.

Jack. Oh ! A sling's no good.

Sam. Anyway, the infant Samuel slew Goliath with a sling.

Jack. Yes, I believe he did ; but we must do as the boy hunters did, and take a tent and a gun. Come on, Sam. Let's go.

Sam. What do you s'pose father would say ?

Jack. Oh ! Your father won't mind if we bring home a new buffalo robe.

Sam. Yes, and we might bring mother a pin-cushion made by Indians. [*Makes motions of firing gun with his cane.*] Won't it be fun to tumble over the bears !

Jack. And scalp the Indians. [*With a whoop.*] Let's be boy hunters.

Sam. And chase the wild buffalo.

Jack. And the bears and the—chipmunks.

Sam. And prairie chickens ?

Sack. And the wild—what's-its-name. Hurray ! Let's get a tent and a gun and a hunting knife. Come on, Sam, come on. We are bound for the wild West. [*Ex. Sam at right, Sam pulling off the hat and coat and throwing them on the sofa.*]

Sam. It's better fun than doctoring, anyway. We'll chase the wild buffalo ! [*Ex. Sam at right.*]

[*Enter Marjorie at left, followed by Katy.*]

Marjorie. [*To Katy.*] Mother expects you. She asked me to tell her when you came. You can sit here, while I go to her room. [*Katy sits by table.*] I'll be right back. [*Ex. at left. Katy looks about for a moment and sees doll on table ; takes it up carefully and looks at it with pleasure.*]

Katy. What a beautiful doll ! I never saw any doll half so lovely.

[*Enter Joe at left. Katy hastily puts down doll on table.*]

Joe. 'Morning. Oh ! You can play with it if you want to. It's Marjorie's doll. Sister calls her Amanda Jane. It's a French doll, and it can shut its eyes—only they are out of order just now.

Katy. [*Taking doll again.*] It's a perfect beauty. It must be a great comfort to have such a doll.

Joe. [*Coming to table.*] Yes. I suppose so. I don't care

much for dolls. I prefer jackstones and skating, and things boys do. Do you like 'em?

Katy. Like who?

Joe. Why, boys. I prefer 'em to girls. [*Sees the box of caramels on table.*] Oh, here are some caramels. Do you like caramels?

Katy. Yes, very much. I haven't had one for more than a year.

Joe. Not had a caramel for a whole year! That's perfectly dreadful. I declare, you ought to have a lot to make up. Hold your handkerchief, and I'll give you some. [**Katy spreads her handkerchief in her lap, and Joe pours part of the caramels into it.**]

Katy. Oh, thank you.

Joe. You won't tell, will you? Maybe Marjorie wouldn't like it.

Katy. [*Hesitating.*] Then, perhaps, I'd better not take them.

Joe. Yes, you may. I dare say Marjorie will not care. Besides, you haven't had a caramel for a whole year, which is just awful.

[*Enter Marjorie at right.*]

Marjorie. [*To Katy.*] Mother says you can come to her room. [*Ex. right. Katy puts caramels in her pocket and rises.*]

Joe. [*Leading the way to right.*] You won't tell, though, will you?

Katy. [*Moving to left.*] Oh, no, of course not, if you do not wish me to. [*Ex. both at left.*]

[*Enter Jack and Sam at left with a sheet, two blankets, an old gun, a hatchet, loaf of bread and some cakes, etc.*]

Jack. [*Placing sheet at centre.*] Let's put the sheet on the floor and put everything into it.

Sam. [*Taking box of caramels and emptying it on sheet.*] Here are some caramels. They will go first-rate with the bear-steak and salmon.

Jack. [*Taking up Marjorie's doll.*] We ought to take a good doll.

Sam. What for?

Jack. [*Putting doll on sheet.*] Why, if we met any Indian girls, we could give it to them, and it will keep them quiet, and they will not wake up the big Indians.

Sam. Shall we meet any real Indians to-day?

Jack. I guess if we go far enough we shall. Now, let's go out the back way, through the woods, and strike right off for the West. [*Jack bundles up the things and Sam takes the gun.*]

Sam. Won't the girls be surprised to find we have gone hunting buffaloes?

Jack. Oh, they won't care. They have their dolls.

Sam. Hadn't we ought to bid the folks good-bye?

Jack. [*At door, back.*] No. Come on. Perhaps they'll come and see us in our first camp. Come on.

Sam. Shall we see a bear soon?

Jack. Mebbby we'll hear 'em growling round the camp to-night.

Sam. Hurray! Now for the wild West. [*Ex. both at back.*]

[*Enter Katy at right with small package in her hand.*]

Katy. [*Looking about.*] How happy they must be with such pretty things and such lovely dolls! Little Pussie at home plays with broken bits of china and a rag doll, under the trees. [*Sees open piano and pauses before it.*] Ah! how grand that is! [*Looks about.*] I wonder if they would mind? [*Touches one key and draws back in alarm.*] Oh! I should like to—and it can't do any harm. [*Touches several notes.*] It sounds like birds inside. [*Looks about.*] There's no one here, and every one seems so good and kind. [*Song here, if desired. Speaks.*] I really must go now. I'd like to see that girl who loves boys again, to thank her for the caramels. Pussie will be so glad to get them. Poor little sister. I'm not sure she ever saw a caramel in her life. [*Looks off back.*] I wonder if this is the way out? There's a garden and lawn. This must be the way to the road. [*Ex. at back.*]

[*Enter Marjorie, leading Dolly by hand, at right.*]

Dolly. I fink I'd like anoizzer caramel.

Marjorie. [*Going to table and opening box.*] So you shall, dear. Why! they are all gone. The box is empty. Why! how strange! Where is Amanda Jane?

[*Enter Joe at right.*]

Joe. She's a first-rate girl, and I'd like to invite her to my party.

Marjorie. [*At centre.*] Who is it? Not the lace-mender's girl? Do you know, I think she's taken my doll. It was here a moment ago and now it's gone.

Dolly. [*At left of table.*] And somebuzzy's stoled all the caramels.

Joe. [*To Marjorie.*] I don't believe she took your doll. She didn't look like a bad girl.

[*Enter Mrs. Morton at right.*]

Mrs. Morton. What is the matter, girls?

Dolly. Somebuzzy's eat up all the caramels.

Marjorie. That Katy Neal has taken my doll.

Joe. [*Crossing to right.*] Oh, I don't believe it. I'll go and ask her if she did.

Marjorie. Anyway, the doll was here, and she was the last person in the room.

Joe. I'll go right out in the driveway and bring her back. She's not a bad girl, and I don't believe she has taken a thing.

Mrs. Morton. She cannot have gone far. Josephine, put on your hat and call her back.

Joe. I don't care for my hat, but I'll find her. [*Ex. at left in haste.*]

Mrs. Morton. [*To Marjorie.*] You are sure your doll was here, Margey? It will be very cruel to accuse the girl of a theft if she didn't do it.

Marjorie. [*Looking off back.*] Why, there she is now talking with the gardener on the lawn. [*Calling off at back.*] Thomas! Thomas! Tell that girl to come back. Mother wants her. [*To Mrs. Morton.*] She's coming. [*Comes down to right and sits with Dolly on her lap.*]

[*Enter Katy at back; comes down to centre.*]

Katy. [*To Mrs. Morton.*] Did you send for me, marm? I hope I didn't forget anything.

Mrs. Morton. No; I called you back to ask you if you saw anything of a large doll.

Marjorie. And some caramels.

Mrs. Morton. [*To Marjorie.*] Hush, Marjorie! [*To Katy.*] Did you see anything of the doll when you were here?

[*Enter Joe. Stands in silence at back, with head bent down.*]

Katy. [*Begins to be alarmed.*] Yes, marm; I saw it, but—I didn't mean any harm and—— [*Aside.*] Oh! where can that girl be? [*Direct.*] You don't think I stole anything? Oh, marm, you don't, you can't think that?

Mrs. Morton. You were the last person here, and the things are gone. You may give me the work again.

Katy. [*Begins to sob.*] Oh ! don't say that, marm. Don't take it. Mother's dreadful poor, and—and—— [*Aside.*] Oh ! why don't that girl speak ? [*Begins to cry.*] Oh ! it is dreadful. I can't tell you, marm, how it is ; I can't really ; but I did not steal anything. [*Katy begins to cry and pulls out her handkerchief and the caramels fall on the floor.*]

Dolly. [*With a wail.*] Oh ! I don't fink I care for caramels any more.

Mrs. Morton. [*Seriously.*] I am very sorry, my child ; you add one fault to another.

Katy. [*Throwing work on table and moving up.*] Oh, marm, you—you may take the work. You may whip me—for—for it all ; but I said I—— Oh ! it is dreadful. I promised I wouldn't tell—and I will not.

TABLEAU. SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT II.

[SCENE.—*A pathway in the woods. At right, a spring of water under a rock and a grassy bank. Entrance at right behind rock. Entrance at left among the trees. Wood scene at back.*]

TIME.—*Afternoon of same day.*

Curtain discovers **Pussie Neal** seated near grass, with bits of broken glass and china, with an apple cut in quarters laid on a piece of white cloth. Has a large rag doll in her arms.]

Pussie. [*Solus.*] I fink I'll play house. Tommy may sit at the head of the table, and Jurusia next to me, and Sarah there. [*Places doll beside her.*] And 'Dusta there. Dinner is all ready, but the milkman didn't come. Guess the cow's gone a-visiting—and the grocery-man was all out of sugar. Will you have some tea, Mister Tommy ? Oh ! I forgot ; the ladies first. [*To the doll.*] Will you have cream in yours, 'Dusta ? No, fank you, I never use it. [*Laughs.*] How lucky that is, for there isn't any. Will you have two lumps in yours, Sarah ? No, fank you, I don't want any. [*Aside.*] I'm so glad, for it's all make-believe. I made the cake myself, but it didn't rise well ; I forgot somesing. [*Sound of distant thunder heard. Speak-*

ing.] Hark ! What is that ? [*Listens.*] Oh ! it's the angels moving the tables 'round. It's sweeping day in the sky. [*To her guests.*] Never mind, ladies and gentlemen, it's only two steps to the house, and if the angels spill the water we'll run into the kitchen and play.

[*Enter Mrs. Neal at right.*]

Mrs. Neal. [*Looks offright.*] Have you seen Katy, Pussie ?

Pussie. No, mother ; and isn't it very funny ? [*Points to rag doll.*] 'Dusta, Eliza has such an appetite, I fear she'll have the cumpshion some day.

Mrs. Neal. Oh ! she's a strong young thing ; I dare say she will soon recover.

Pussie. Yes, 'Dusta, Eliza is pretty tough—Katy said so. [*Thunder heard.*]

Mrs. Neal. I'm sorry Katy is so late. There's a shower coming up, and she may get caught in it. Come, dear, bring dolly into the house. It's going to rain.

Pussie. Shall I ask Tommy and Jurusia and the others to come in ?

Mrs. Neal. Who are Tommy and Jurusia ?

Pussie. [*Laughs.*] Oh ! they are make-believes. They came to tea with me. I really ought to ask them in, if it rains.

Mrs. Neal. Oh, certainly. Present my compliments, and tell them I shall be delighted to have them call.

Pussie. [*To imaginary guests.*] Mrs. Neal sends her compliments, and you are to come in the kitchen if it rains.

Mrs. Neal. [*With a laugh.*] Oh, Pussie, Pussie ! You bring back my girl days, when I played with my girl friend who lived next door. She liked to play house so much that, one day, she turned the hens all out of their house, and invited me to come and live with her there.

Pussie. She doesn't live in the hens' house now ?

Mrs. Neal. [*Laughs.*] No ; I think not, but I really don't know ; for after that I went away to school, and I never saw her again. [*Looks off left.*] Oh, there's Katy coming through the woods. She looks tired and troubled. I wonder what's the matter ?

[*Enter Katy at left.*]

Katy. Oh, mother ! I'm glad you came to meet me. I've had a dreadful time, and—I've—I've lost the work.

Mrs. Neal. Oh, Katy ! How careless of you ! How could you have lost it ?

Katy. I didn't lose it in that way. The lady—oh, mother!—the lady said I stole some caramels, and she took the work away.

Mrs. Neal. Never mind, dear. Of course, you didn't take the caramels. The lady was mistaken.

Katy. Yes—she was mistaken,—but I had some of the caramels in my pocket.

Mrs. Neal. Oh, Katy!

Katy. [*Sobbing.*] But I did not take them. Indeed, I did not. One of the girls there—who loved boys—gave them to me, and told me not to tell, and I wouldn't, and—oh, it was so cruel in them to call me a thief when I'd promised not to tell where I got the caramels.

Mrs. Neal. Yes, dear, they were unkind, but we must forgive them. Some day they will find out their mistake. Let us go home now. [*All move to right.*]

Pussie. [*With doll.*] We must hurry, mother. Dolly is dressed rather thin, and she may take cold. [*Ex. all at right.*]

[*Enter Jack and Sam at left, with all their things and two rough poles. Both very tired.*]

Jack. Here's a good place to camp. [*Thunder heard.*]

Sam. [*Dropping his load.*] Cricky! It's going to rain. I don't suppose there's a house anywhere near. I'm awful tired.

Jack. [*Placing things on the ground.*] What's the good of a house, when we've got a tent? [*Sees the spring.*] Here's a spring and a grassy place, just as it said in the "Boy Hunters." Let's pitch the tent here for the night.

Sam. [*Looks off at back.*] I guess we'd better. It looks awful black over there. [*They set up one pole in the ground near back, and rest the other on top and on limb of tree, and take the things out of the sheet and put the sheet over the poles to make a tent.*]

Jack. [*While at work.*] That's the style! Put some stones on the sides of the tent to keep it from blowing away. We'll pin it together at the back.

Sam. [*Putting blankets and other things in tent.*] This is just gay; I don't believe any fellows ever had such a good time.

Jack. [*Taking up hatchet.*] Now, let's chop down some bushes and make a fire.

Sam. Won't the bears find the tent?

Jack. [*Moves to right.*] Oh, I guess not; they may smell round—that's all; we won't go far. We'll have a fire soon and get supper,

Sam. Enough said. I'm awful hungry, anyway. [*Ex. both at right first entrance.*]

[*Enter Micky Flynn, at left.*]

Micky. [*Solus.*] I must peg along lively, or I'll get a soaking. [*Sees tent.*] Hullo! Here's a lark! Some fellows camping out. [*Sees the doll.*] Blue herrings and broomsticks! What's that? A doll! It must be a girls' camp. [*Takes up doll and throws it down again.*] That's no good. Blue herrings again! There's a gun! That's the thing for me.

Katy. [*Outside at right.*] Hurry, Pussie! We must find the things before it rains.

Micky. [*Slipping into tent.*] Somebody's coming. I'll just lay low.

[*Enter Katy and Pussie at right.*]

Katy. [*Comes down without observing tent.*] Where did you leave the things, Pussie?

Pussie. I was playing near the spring with Tommy and 'Dusta, and the others.

Katy. Tommy and 'Dusta! Who are they?

Pussie. Oh, they were only make-believes.

Katy. [*Picking up the playthings.*] Here they are. Now, we must run home as fast as we can. [*Sees tent.*] Why! some boys have camped here.

Pussie. [*Points to tent.*] Oh, the boy is there!

Micky. [*Comes out of tent with gun in his hand, at centre.*] What yer want here? [*Pussie retreats and clings to Katy.*]

Katy. [*At right centre.*] Oh, we didn't know you were there. We were going home.

Micky. Well, just get along with ye, and don't ye tell anybody I'm here.

[*Enter Sam with bundle of brushwood in his arms, at right.*]

Katy and Pussie move up.

Sam. [*Sees Micky; pauses at right centre.*] What you doing with that gun? This is our camp, and you had better go away.

Micky. [*At centre, to Sam.*] What you got to say about it, small boy? [*Threatens to strike Sam, who retreats to left, and lets wood fall on floor.*]

Sam. That's our gun, and you had better put it down.

Katy. [*To Micky.*] Oh, for shame! To strike a little fellow like that.

Micky. [*To Katy, and threatening her.*] I'll give you the same, if you don't clear out.

[*Enter Jack, with wood and hatchet, at right.*]

Jack. [*Throwing down the wood at right.*] What do you mean? You're a coward, to strike a girl.

Micky. [*Drops gun and rolls up sleeves.*] Oh! I'm a coward, am I?

Jack. [*Pulling off his coat.*] It's mean to strike a girl, and I'll thrash you if you touch her.

Katy. Mercy! They are going to fight. [*To Pussie.*] Run right home, Pussie, and tell mother. [*Ex. Pussie at right. Thunder heard louder than before. Lights down slightly.*]

Micky. [*Preparing to fight.*] He called me a coward. I'll just punch his head for it. [*During this Sam also rolls up his sleeves.*]

Jack. [*To Sam.*] Stand back, Sam. Let's have a fair fight. [*To Micky.*] I'll teach you to strike a girl. [*The boys square off as if to fight. A sudden flash of lightning and louder thunder. Lights down.*]

Katy. Mercy! How it pours! [*Ex. quickly at right. Sam at same time dives into tent for shelter.*]

Micky. [*Suddenly picks up gun and moves left.*] Blue herrings and broomsticks! It's coming down like sixty. [*Runs off at left.*]

Jack. Ginger! This is awful. Guess I'll make for the tent. [*Dives into the tent.*]

Sam. [*Inside tent.*] Oh! the water is coming in. I'm all wet.

Jack. Hang on to the tent-pole, or the whole thing will fall down.

Sam. I can't! I can't! The water is running down my back. Oh! there's a brook running through the tent. [*The tent sways from side to side. Lightning and thunder and heavy rain.*]

Jack. Hold her down! Hold her down, or she'll blow away.

Sam. Oh! I can't. It's raining in. Oh, take me home. Take me home. I'm all wet. I want my mother. Boo-hoo!

Jack. Oh, you're no kind of a hunter, Sam. Who's afraid of a—— [*The tent falls down on the boys, who struggle to escape. Jack appears at one side and Sam the other.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Neal and Katy under spread umbrellas, followed by Pussie holding a ragged little parasol. Mrs Neal and*

Katy pull the boys out from under the tent and carry them off quickly at right. Katy finds the doll and carries it off right. The thunder dies away and the rain stops and it grows lighter. After brief pause, enter Joe at left with umbrella. Lights up.]

Joe. Life is an awful bother. My good revolutions broke all to pieces. And now the boys are lost and everybody is raving distracted and running every which way to find 'em. Mother sent for the constable and they rung the meeting-house bell and I started right out to find them and I got caught in a shower and had to stay in the blacksmith shop and the blacksmith's wife lent me an umbrella and she said she knew the boys wouldn't go far, [*Discovers tent.*] Why! Do look at that sheet. Somebody has been camping here. I hope it's not gypsies. [*Startled, moves to right.*] Why! Somebody's coming.

[*Enter Micky Flinn at right, and carrying the gun.*]

Micky. Blue herrings! It's a girl!

Joe. [*Aside.*] It's only a boy. [*To Micky.*] You haven't seen two lost boys, have you?

Micky. Sixty! Boys lost? Say, your name isn't Morton, is it?

Joe. Yes. I'm Joe.

Micky. I found this gun and it's marked "Morton."

Joe. Why, that's father's gun. Let me see it.

Micky. [*Holding back.*] Hold on, Daisy. Who are you, anyway?

Joe. I'm Joe—Joe Morton. Let me take the gun.

Micky. Oh! All right.

Joe. [*Takes the gun and handles it as if she was familiar with it.*] Why, it's father's gun. I've fired it ever so many times.

Micky. Blue herrings! You fire a gun? You are tough.

Joe. Where did you get this gun?

Micky. Why, I found it. I'll take it now.

Joe. [*Drawing back.*] No, sir—I'm going to keep it.

Micky. Oh! come off. Give me the shooting-iron.

Joe. [*Standing on the defensive.*] I will not.

Micky. Oh! What fooling is this? Give it me or I'll hit yer.

Joe. [*Snapping the lock and standing at guard.*] Stand back!

Micky. [*Alarmed.*] Oh, don't shoot! Don't shoot! I—I didn't mean nuffin. [*Aside.*] Never seed such a tough girl before.

Joe. Where did you get this gun?

Micky. Why—I——

Joe. Where did you get this gun?

Micky. I—I—— [*Aside.*] Blue herrings! Here's another.

[*Enter Marjorie in haste at left.*]

Marjorie. Why, Joe! How came you here?

Joe. I've met the enemy and they—I mean he is mine.

[*To Micky.*] Now, Mister Boy, where did you get this gun?

Micky. I found it.

Marjorie. Josephine Morton, you are a boy.

Joe. Where?

Micky. Well, mum, there was two boys——

Marjorie. Two boys?

Micky. Yes'm! Big boy and little boy, and they had a camp and it came on to rain and they left the gun and I thought I'd take care of it.

Marjorie. Oh! it was Jack and the Judge. Mother is nearly distracted and everybody is scouring the woods and fields. I declare I never knew boys were so important till they were lost.

Joe. [*To Micky.*] Then where are the boys now?

Micky. I don't know—honest now! I don't know where they went to.

Joe. Marjorie, you run home quick's you can scamper and tell mother we have found the boys' camp.

Marjorie. You are not afraid to stay here—alone?

Joe. Oh, no; mister—what's your name, boy?

Micky. Micky.

Joe. [*Business with gun.*] Attention! There! Your full name?

Micky. Michael Macgillicuddy Flynn.

Joe. Mister Michael Macgillicuddy Flynn, Esquire, will stay with me till you get back with mother—won't you, Michael?

Micky. Yes—yes'm!

Joe. [*Shouldering gun; to Micky.*] 'Tis well. [*To Marjorie.*] Now, do hurry, Marjorie.

Marjorie. I'll run all the way. [*Ex. at right. Joe marches up and down on guard.*]

Micky. [*After a pause.*] Say, Cap'n, aren't you tired carrying that gun?

Joe. No talking in the ranks.

Micky. Yes, sir. I ain't saying a word, am I? [*Aside.*] Blue herrings! Here comes a woman!

[*Enter Mrs. Neal at right.*]

Mrs. Neal. [*Stops in surprise.*] Why, what does this mean?

Joe. Oh, nothing, marm. The boys are lost and this person, this Mister Michael Macgillicuddy Flynn, knows something about it. I'm holding him till the authorities arrive.

Micky. Oh, I——

Joe. Silence! Base coward! [*Aside to Mrs. Neal.*] The gun isn't loaded, but I've got him dead frightened.

Mrs. Neal. Two boys—lost?

Joe. Yes, marm. Master Jack Morton—my brother, and the Judge—I mean Sam Blanchard.

Mrs. Neal. [*Calls left.*] Katy! Katy!

Katy. [*Outside, left.*] Coming.

Mrs. Neal. Bring the boys here. Here is somebody who knows them.

Joe. [*Dropping the gun on the ground and running to Mrs. Neal.*] Oh! Oh! You found them! Then they are safe. And Sam, is he all right? His mother is just raving, distracted. And Jack! Why, mother nearly had the 'sterics and—— [*Laughs.*] Oh, dear! I shall cry in a minute, I know I shall.

Mrs. Neal. [*Putting her arms about her.*] You dear child! They are both safe.

Joe. Oh! I'm so glad. [*Laughs.*] I love boys. [*Cries.*] And Jack's such a—a good boy—and the Judge—is a—well, Sam's—such a little fellow.

[*Enter Katy at left; stops in surprise. Joe breaks away from Mrs. Neal and runs to Katy.*]

Joe. Oh! Here you are! Can you forgive me? I was so selfish to let you suffer. I've cried my eyes out thinking how mean it was not to say I gave you the caramels.

Katy. Oh, I didn't mind. Of course it was all a mistake. I'll go for the boys. [*Ex. right. Sound of shouts and voices in distance at right.*]

Micky. Blue herrings and broomsticks! The procession is coming.

[*Enter Marjorie at right.*]

Marjorie. She's coming! Mother's coming!

[*Enter Mrs. Morton at right, followed by Kitty and Dolly.*]

Mrs. Morton. [*Surprised.*] Why, Mary Samson! This is a surprise! I didn't know you lived so near. I didn't know you were the Mrs. Neal. [*Presents Joe.*] This is my Josephine. [*Presents Marjorie.*] And this is my Marjorie. And to think you found my Jack! Where are the boys?

[*Enter Pussie at right; goes to Mrs. Neal.*]

Mrs. Neal. They are both safe and sound at my house.

Mrs. Morton. [*Presents Dolly.*] And this is my sister's Dolly. [*To Dolly.*] Dolly dear, this is the girl I used to know when I was a girl.

Dolly. [*To Mrs. Neal.*] Are you Little Butterpat? [*All laugh.*]

Mrs. Neal. [*To Mrs. Morton.*] How that brings up the old school-days and its tears and laughter. [*Presenting Pussie.*] And this is my Pussie. [*To Pussie.*] Pussie, dear, this lady was my old school-mate.

Pussie. Do you live in the hens' house now? [*All laugh.*]

[*Enter Jack at right; Jack dressed in a suit too big for him.*]

Jack. Here we are, We had a bully time.

Mrs. Morton. Oh, Jack! Where have you been?

Jack. We went hunting Indians, but it came on to rain and — [*Sees Joe.*] Hullo, Joe! Tell you, Katy Neal's the best kind of a girl. She can make the primest griddle-cakes you ever saw. I ate ten and Sam seven.

Mrs. Morton. You precious child! Where is Sam?

Jack. Oh! the Judge is coming with Katy.

Mrs. Morton. And what have you got on?

Mrs. Neal. They were wet through and I gave Jack my Tom's suit and Katy fitted out Sam. Oh! and here they are now.

[*Enter Katy leading Sam, who is dressed in a girl's frock.*
All laugh.]

Sam. We had such a time! We had a camp, and most had a fight. We didn't see a single bear or Indian.

Mrs. Morton. You precious child, you had a fight?

Katy. A rude boy troubled me and [*points to Jack*] this brave boy was going to thrash him, but it began to rain.

Joe. Who licked, Jack?

Jack. We called it a drorred game, because it began to rain and the rain demoralized the boy.

Joe. My ! What a big word ! [*All laugh.*]

Marjorie. [*Gathers up the tent and discovers the doll under it.*] Oh ! Oh ! Here's Amanda Jane. And her complexion is ruined. [*All laugh.*]

Jack. Oh ! We took that to give to the Indians to keep 'em quiet. Tell you, the story papers are no good.

Joe. And Katy never took the doll at all, and I gave her the caramels, and I was afraid to tell.

Marjorie. Oh, Joe ! How could you ! I wouldn't have cared if she had 'em all.

Mrs. Morton. [*To Micky.*] And did you help find the boys ?

Micky. No, mum. I found the gun.

Joe. Yes, he did, mother. He helped. His name is Michael Macgillicuddy Flynn. Isn't it, Mike ?

Micky. Yes, sir. [*All laugh.*]

Mrs. Morton. Well, Michael, it is Josephine's birthday, and you must come home with us and help eat up the birthday cake.

Micky. You don't mean it ?

Jack. Of course she does. Joe likes boys, and you'll have a tip-top time.

Micky. I'll go—[*points to Katy*—if that girl will forgive me.

Katy. Oh ! Everybody is so good and kind, I'll forgive you with all my heart.

Mrs. Morton. Come, children, it's time to go home. Come, Pussie and Katy and Michael, and Mary Samson, dear, you must come with the rest. We, too, must live our childhood again in our children.

Joe. Come on, boys. My birthday is over and I must get up a new set of revolutions. [*All move off right with the tent and things and talking and laughing together.*]

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